

THE HUNT FOR THE HISTORY

Grade Level: 4 - 8

OBJECTIVE:

Students will discover how different the Falls area was in the early 1800's. Students will be able compare that time to our present day life and be able to decide in which time they would prefer to live.

RESOURCES:

The Public library
The Falls of the Ohio Interpretive Center
The Filson Historical Society
The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Indiana Historical Bureau
Kentucky Historical Society
The Internet

SUGGESTIONS TO THE TEACHER:

Research could be done in teams. Students could pick a topic that interests them. Reports could be done in written form or done as an art project (drawings, diorama, mini-plays, stories). At the end of the activity ask the students which time period they prefer to live in (then or now) and why.

PROCEDURES:

Assign students research projects on an aspect of life in the late 18th to early 19th century.

1. Look at a map of the Falls during the Late 1700's. (Map is included at the end of this lesson.) Compare with a modern map of the Louisville area and determine the major differences between the area then and now. Locate Corn Island (adjacent to Louisville) on the 1796 map. This seven acre island was where the first fort in this area was built. It no longer appears on maps of the Falls area. Have the students find out what happened to Corn Island.

2. The map shows Fort Steuben in Jeffersonville, Indiana. There is an un-named fort in Louisville – what is its name? Research how many forts were built at the Falls, when, and what were their names.

3. Look up information on the canal. When was it built? How did people get around the Falls of the Ohio before the canal was constructed?

4. Research log cabins. Build models of them and find out how the settlers heated them, how they cooked their food, how many rooms they had, where they got their water for drinking, cooking, bathing and washing their clothes.



Small model of a pioneer cabin at Interpretive Center

5. Find the names of some of the steamboats that traveled the Ohio in the 1800's. The "New Orleans" was the first steamboat on the Ohio. Research its history. Write a ship's log or a diary of the events that might have happened while traveling on the river.

6. What is a "Buffalo trace" How did it get its name?

7. How did people, livestock and cargo get across the river before there were bridges? When was the first bridge built in this area? Where was it?

8. Find out about the grist mills that the settlers built along the streams that ran into the Ohio River and answer the following questions: What was ground up in the grist mill? How is this done today? What powered the grist mill? Did these mills cause any pollution? Why couldn't the settlers just go to the store like we do to get what they needed? What type of businesses were here in the 1800's?



Model of a Grist Mill in the Interpretive Center exhibit gallery

9. What would it be like to live on a flatboat or a keelboat like the ones the settlers used coming down the Ohio River to settle in Indiana or Kentucky? Encourage students to read and write about the topic and answer the following questions in their stories. Where would you sleep on the boats? Where would you get food? What do you think they did with garbage and waste materials? Did they bring any animals with them? Where did they keep them?



Keelboat on the river

10. Assign the students partners to report on the famous people that are connected to the Falls of the Ohio in some way and are part of the exhibits in the park Interpretive Center. Some of them are listed below.

- John James Audubon
- George Rogers Clark
- William Clark
- James Hall
- Meriwether Lewis
- Prince Madoc
- William A McAlpine
- Constantine Rafinesque
- Sacajawea
- Tecumseh



Constantine Rafinesque – An Early Naturalist



James Hall – A prolific paleontologist of the 19th century